

# Los Alamos

NATIONAL LABORATORY

## memorandum

**FACILITIES, SECURITY and SAFEGUARDS**  
**FSS-15, PERSONNEL and INFORMATION SECURITY**

To/MS: Master Management and Administrative &  
Support Distribution

Thru: Robert S. Vrooman, FSS-15, MS G733

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SUBJECT: COLOR CODED BADGES

I have received numerous responses to a recent memorandum from Robert Vrooman, Group Leader, FSS-15 (May 7, 1997, Comments - Changes to the DOE Standard Badge) which was sent to Master Management and Administrative and Support distribution.

Given the degree of interest, and the nature of many of the comments I would like to provide some background on what led to the request for comment, as well as summarize the responses received in terms of certain main concerns.

On April 29-30, a meeting of the Access Systems Quality Panel (ASQP), one of several quality panels set up by the DOE, met. The panel membership includes DOE program office staff, operations and field office staff, and contractor sites, and is chaired by an employee of the DOE Office of Safeguards and Security (DOE/OSS). The members present voted unanimously to return to using color to distinguish clearance levels on badges. This vote came hard on the heels of a similar vote taken by the Nuclear Security Information Exchange (NSIE), whose members are the directors of safeguards and security at the various DOE sites. Since two influential bodies have both voted unanimously to use color to indicate clearance level, it seems likely that this will be implemented, although it has not been formally approved, nor has a schedule for the transition been proposed.

In the interest of reducing costs and disruption, the NSIE unanimously agreed that the changeover should be a phased, gradual transition to avoid unnecessary costs. One approach would be to retain green for Q; thus, it would only be necessary to rebadge L and uncleared individuals over the short-term.

**The use of color is to be part of a future DOE-wide standard badge** and the basic layout, coding, and other elements of the DOE standard badge are to remain the same. Each organization represented on the ASQP was asked to prepare comments on details of the proposal (e.g., specific colors) and on how to distinguish foreign nationals from U.S. citizens, which remains important since cleared foreign nationals do not have exactly the same access privileges as U.S. citizens. Finally, if an organization wished to, it could comment on other aspects of the standard badge, provided any changes proposed would be relatively insignificant to the construction and overall design.

The "Comments" in the May 7 memorandum's subject line referred to Los Alamos National Laboratory's comments submitted to the ASQP. Decisions on colors, badges for foreign nationals, and any other proposed changes, will emerge from a consensus once the panel members have had an opportunity to review all the comments and develop an official recommendation to DOE/OSS.

Many of the LANL respondents expressed concern that LANL would be undertaking a reversion to its own separate badge and that the benefits of a DOE-wide standard badge would be lost. Hopefully, the background above will reassure them that the implementation of color coding will be an enhancement to the present standard badge.

A number of those who commented were deeply concerned about the cost, especially since this Laboratory had had its own color-coded badges and went to a single color. In reverting to color, we are, at great cost, returning to what could have been predicted to be the most secure approach to identifying clearances in individuals. The fact is that the former Secretary of Energy became personally involved and made a decision that there would be a single color for all standard badges. This was not widely supported at the time, deep concerns about controlling access to classified matter have persisted, and with a new Secretary at the helm, the time has come for a reconsideration of the matter.

Many complaints were received about the need for a white access control card in addition to the standard badge. Unfortunately, due to specific LANL site problems, it was necessary to issue the access card for entry into protected areas until the access control system could accept the standard badge. FSS-11 is planning to begin converting all badge readers, turnstiles, and access booths during the month of August to allow use of the standard badge. The conversion process will be area-by-area; there will be advance notice of the change at the Group level. After that the laminated DOE standard badge will operate all the access control systems and the white access card will no longer be necessary.

A substantial number of those commenting saw a problem in using green to indicate Q clearance and red to indicate uncleared, since the most common form of colorblindness involves inability to distinguish green from red. There are several points to bear in mind:

1. The comments submitted to DOE represent only LANL's position - the final determination of specific colors will result from a consensus of all DOE components and contractor organizations;
2. The numerical indicators of clearance will remain.

A frequent request was that when badges are re-issued that the individual's name appear in larger letters, similar to those that were on the LANL site badge that preceded the DOE standard badge. It is not likely that this request can be honored, since it will substantially affect the layout of the standard badge. However, this request, along with all others received, will be forwarded to the ASQP for consideration.

Please feel free to contact me at [kac@lanl.gov](mailto:kac@lanl.gov) if you have additional comments or questions.

KAC:RSV:lj